

## **Talladega College, Talladega, Ala.**

**Rev. J. M. P. Metcalf, President**

**I**N Talladega, a town of upper Alabama, near the picturesque hills of the Blue Ridge, an imposing brick building was erected in 1852, by the slaves, as a high school for the sons of their masters. During the war it was used as a prison for the Federal soldiers, and in 1867 was purchased by the American Missionary Association (Congregational) as a school building for the race whose labor had erected it and whose freedom was due to the army who furnished the prisoners. This was the beginning of Talladega College, the first chartered school in Alabama opened to the colored people of that state.

The slave carpenter who sawed the first plank for the building, sighing because his children would never have a chance for education like the children of his master, lived to see three of his children receive diplomas from Talladega, pursuing advanced studies in a recitation room containing a window pane on which, in 1862, a Northern soldier had cut the words, "Prisoners of War." Two of the children of the former slave carpenter are teachers in the institution, and the third surrendered a position as teacher to become the wife of a minister who was trained in the same school.

### **Remarkable Changes in a Generation**

The remarkable changes, both in human opinions and in social conditions, within a single generation, find illustration in an incident which includes both: When, in 1861, the newly organized Confederate States government called for volunteers to aid in maintaining its existence, no more hearty response was made than by the pupils of the Boys' High School located on one of Talladega's suburban hills. Among those who volunteered was a young man, eighteen years of age, known then as "Joe" Johnston. He was soon sent to the front, and, after serving through the war, he was mustered out bearing a captain's commission.

Years passed, the white boys' high school building had changed hands and had become the Swayne Hall of Talladega College for Negroes, and just a third of a century after the close of the Civil War, Alabama's chief executive was Capt. Joseph F. Johnston, governor of the state.

In 1898 another call for volunteers came to that same school building. It was from Governor Johnston, and was sent in the name of the government of the United States to the boys of the Negro college, inviting them to enlist in the Third Alabama Regiment, and, if necessary, to fight for the liberty of Cuba. Some thirty of them responded, and all who were mustered in brought honor to their race and to the country which called them.

### **The Present Talladega College**

Talladega forty-two years ago had a single building and 140 pupils, scarcely one of whom could read. The present Talladega College has 20 buildings clustered about the original campus; a large farm and property which, with endowments, is worth \$400,000; 35 professors and instructors. It has an annual attendance of more than six hundred students in its several departments — preparatory, normal, college, theological, music — and conducts departments of wood working, iron and printing, an agricultural department with a farm of 800 acres, and nurse training, cooking and sewing work.

The school for forty-two years has both developed the colored people and developed with them. In 1868 a church was organized, and a department of theology with 18 members but three years out of slavery. Now, ten churches in Alabama are the outgrowth of this first Congregational church. Talladega was the first boarding school for the freedmen in Alabama, and said to be the first in the United States to introduce among them industrial training.

### **Eminent Graduates of Talladega**

Among the graduates are the presidents of three colleges in Alabama, Florida and Texas; the dean of a theological seminary in Atlanta, and principals of city schools in Montgomery, Tuskegee, Girard, Ala., Dallas and Forney, Tex. During 1908 fifty-five graduates of Talladega were employed in the churches and schools of the American Missionary Association in nine of the Southern states.

The annual requirements for the expenses of the college are \$20,000. Two thirds of this amount is secured from the American Missionary Association, and the remainder from tuition, income from endowment funds, and individual contributions.